

House File 24 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE 24

BY J. TAYLOR

A BILL FOR

1 An Act providing for administration of a civics examination
2 by school districts and accredited nonpublic schools as a
3 condition of high school graduation.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 256.9, Code 2011, is amended by adding
2 the following new subsection:

3 NEW SUBSECTION. 62. Approve alternative civics assessments
4 pursuant to section 280.9A, subsection 1, paragraph "b".

5 Sec. 2. Section 280.9A, subsection 1, Code 2011, is amended
6 to read as follows:

7 1. The board of directors of each local public school
8 district and the authorities in charge of each nonpublic school
9 shall require that all students in grades nine through twelve
10 successfully complete or pass, as applicable, as a condition of
11 graduation, ~~instruction~~ the following:

12 a. Instruction in American history and the governments of
13 Iowa and the United States, including instruction in voting
14 statutes and procedures, voter registration requirements,
15 the use of paper ballots and voting systems in the election
16 process, and the method of acquiring and casting an absentee
17 ballot.

18 b. A civics examination. The examination shall be the
19 same as, and shall include all questions used in, the latest
20 available civics examination administered by the United States
21 citizenship and immigration services office. The proctored
22 examination shall be completed without ancillary materials and
23 only students who score a proficiency of seventy-five percent
24 or higher shall be considered to have successfully passed the
25 examination. Alternative assessment measures approved by the
26 department of education pursuant to section 256.9, subsection
27 62, may be administered to children requiring special education
28 as defined in section 256B.2, subsection 1, and to students
29 identified as limited English proficient pursuant to section
30 280.4.

31 Sec. 3. STATE MANDATE FUNDING SPECIFIED. In accordance
32 with section 25B.2, subsection 3, the state cost of requiring
33 compliance with any state mandate included in this Act shall
34 be paid by a school district from state school foundation aid
35 received by the school district under section 257.16. This

1 specification of the payment of the state cost shall be deemed
2 to meet all of the state funding-related requirements of
3 section 25B.2, subsection 3, and no additional state funding
4 shall be necessary for the full implementation of this Act
5 by and enforcement of this Act against all affected school
6 districts.

7 EXPLANATION

8 This bill requires students enrolled in school districts
9 and accredited nonpublic schools to successfully pass as
10 a condition of graduation a proctored civics examination
11 that is the same as the latest available civics examination
12 administered by the U.S. citizenship and immigration services
13 office. Students are prohibited from using ancillary materials
14 during the examination and must achieve a score of at least 75
15 percent to successfully pass the examination.

16 The director of the department of education is tasked with
17 approving alternative assessment measures that school districts
18 and accredited nonpublic schools may administer to children
19 requiring special education and to English language learners.

20 This bill may include a state mandate as defined in Code
21 section 25B.3. The bill requires that the state cost of
22 any state mandate included in the bill be paid by a school
23 district from state school foundation aid received by the
24 school district under Code section 257.16. The specification
25 is deemed to constitute state compliance with any state mandate
26 funding-related requirements of Code section 25B.2. The
27 inclusion of this specification is intended to reinstate the
28 requirement of political subdivisions to comply with any state
29 mandates included in the bill.